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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGO](#) [PHUM](#) [GR](#) [KIRF](#)
SUBJECT: GREECE/OSCE: BAKOYIANNIS MEETING WITH OSCE
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR COMBATTING ANTI-SEMITISM

Classified By: Ambassador Daniel V. Speckhard for 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: Rabbi Andrew Baker, the OSCE Personal Representative for Combating Anti-Semitism (and International Jewish Affairs Director for the American Jewish Committee) told Polofs that the OSCE Chairmanship was focused on security issues, and had not developed an agenda or active plan for his portfolio. Baker met with Bakoyiannis and her OSCE task force in Athens on March 3, his second meeting with her since he was appointed in January. Bakoyiannis told Baker that she was currently focused on the more "contentious" issues of the OSCE presence in Georgia and on Russia's security proposals, and hoped to have progress on those topics first before addressing the missions of the three Personal Representatives on promoting tolerance and non-discrimination. According to Baker, Bakoyiannis hoped that Russian FM Lavrov and Secretary Clinton could "work something out" during their March 6 meeting in Geneva. Baker also elicited Bakoyiannis' take on issues of concern to the Jewish community in Greece. END SUMMARY.

. (C) Given the absence of clear direction from the Greek CiO on anti-Semitism issues, Baker proposed his own agenda to Bakoyiannis and elicited her reaction. Baker's proposals included:

-- Organizing an OSCE/ODIHR roundtable on anti-Semitism with representatives of Jewish organizations. Baker said that this meeting would be especially important given the wave of anti-Semitic sentiment in Europe following Israeli military action in Gaza. Bakoyiannis had no strong reaction to this proposal, according to Baker; he plans to move forward. The roundtable, which follows roundtables organized by the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) on discrimination against Muslims held in December 2008 and on discrimination against Christians held on March 4, 2009, is on ODIHR's schedule for March 17 in Vienna.

-- A joint visit by the three Personal Representatives for tolerance and non-discrimination to Washington, followed by a visit to Moscow. Baker said that he had only briefly met the other two Personal Representatives in January, in Vienna. He believes their two visits would help bridge differences between the U.S. and the Russian Federation on human dimension issues. (Baker did not provide specifics.) Baker also noted that it would be appropriate for the Personal Representatives to visit the Russian-Jewish Museum of Tolerance, currently under construction in Moscow. Bakoyiannis thought this was a good idea, according to Baker, but wanted to settle the more contentious issues related to Georgia and security before moving forward.

-- Increase extrabudgetary commitments to support OSCE/ODIHR goals on tolerance. (In explaining this proposal to Poloffs, Baker claimed that U.S. extrabudgetary commitments had decreased during the last few years and that the USG should return its funding to previous, higher levels.) Bakoyiannis

reacted by saying that she was aware of the OSCE's budget issues and broader extrabudgetary issues with the Russians but, according to Baker, had no substantive response.

13. (C) Baker also discussed with Bakoyiannis issues of concern to the Jewish communities in Athens and Thessaloniki:

-- Right-wing LAOS party leader Karatzaferis and anti-Semitic statements. Bakoyiannis was "dismissive" of LAOS and its leader, according to Baker, saying it was a "free speech problem." She herself was sometimes attacked in Parliament as being too pro-American and pro-Israel. Bakoyiannis mentioned to Baker that she had a good relationship with Moses Constantinis, a leader in the Athens Jewish community. (NOTE: Constantinis is a close Embassy contact and we know that the good feelings are mutual. END NOTE.)

-- Jewish cemetery / property restitution issues in Thessaloniki. According to Baker, Bakoyiannis said that these issues had "all been settled." (NOTE: Baker and Bakoyiannis may have misunderstood each other, or Bakoyiannis may have had incomplete information on this subject. According to the local Jewish community in Thessaloniki, in February the Ministry of Finance appointed a new president for the committee tasked to settle the property restitution issue. The new committee has not met yet. Under the previous president, the committee met a few times but made no substantive progress. Staff-level contacts in the Ministry of Finance have indicated for several months that the committee will reach conclusions soon. END NOTE.)

-- Construction of a Metro subway station at and partly

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inside the cemetery border, next to Aristotle University. Bakoyiannis said that the government is considering constructing a memorial in the new subway station honoring the cemetery and/or the Jewish community in some way, according to Baker. (NOTE: According to David Saltiel, the leader of the Thessaloniki Jewish community, both the head of the Thessaloniki Metro construction company and Deputy Foreign Minister Theodore Kassimis had offered to create some kind of monument to the cemetery in the subway station. Saltiel requested but never received confirmation of this offer in writing. END NOTE.)

14. (SBU) The Greek OSCE delegation noted to USOSCE that the reason for inviting Baker to Athens was to press Baker to coordinate his activities more closely with Bakoyiannis and her OSCE staff. The Greeks had been caught by surprise on Baker's participation in the February 15-17 London Conference on Combating Anti-Semitism and did not clear on a speech he gave while there in his role as OSCE Personal Representative on Combating Anti-Semitism.

15. (SBU) After his meetings with Bakoyiannis and her OSCE task force, Baker met with Panayote Dimitras, the outspoken head of the Greek Helsinki Monitor, and Moses Constantinis, a leader of the Athens Jewish community. Baker said that he might be returning to Greece in a few months' time. Embassy Athens and Consulate General Thessaloniki will continue to engage the Greek government on issues of concern to the local Jewish communities.

16. (U) US Mission OSCE Vienna cleared this cable.
SPECKHARD